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Putting Research into Practice; or Putting Practice into Research

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ASTO 2018 Conference



Sail Training

Since mid-20th Century adapted as a type of situated residential outdoor adventure education; training ***by the sea*** as opposed to ***for the sea***

- Kurt Hahn
- delivering sustainable personal and social development outcomes (see Schijf, Allison & Von Wald, 2017)

A unique cultural experience forged by the challenges of ***being at sea***

- Man and Nature
- Man and Man

(after Rediker, 1993)

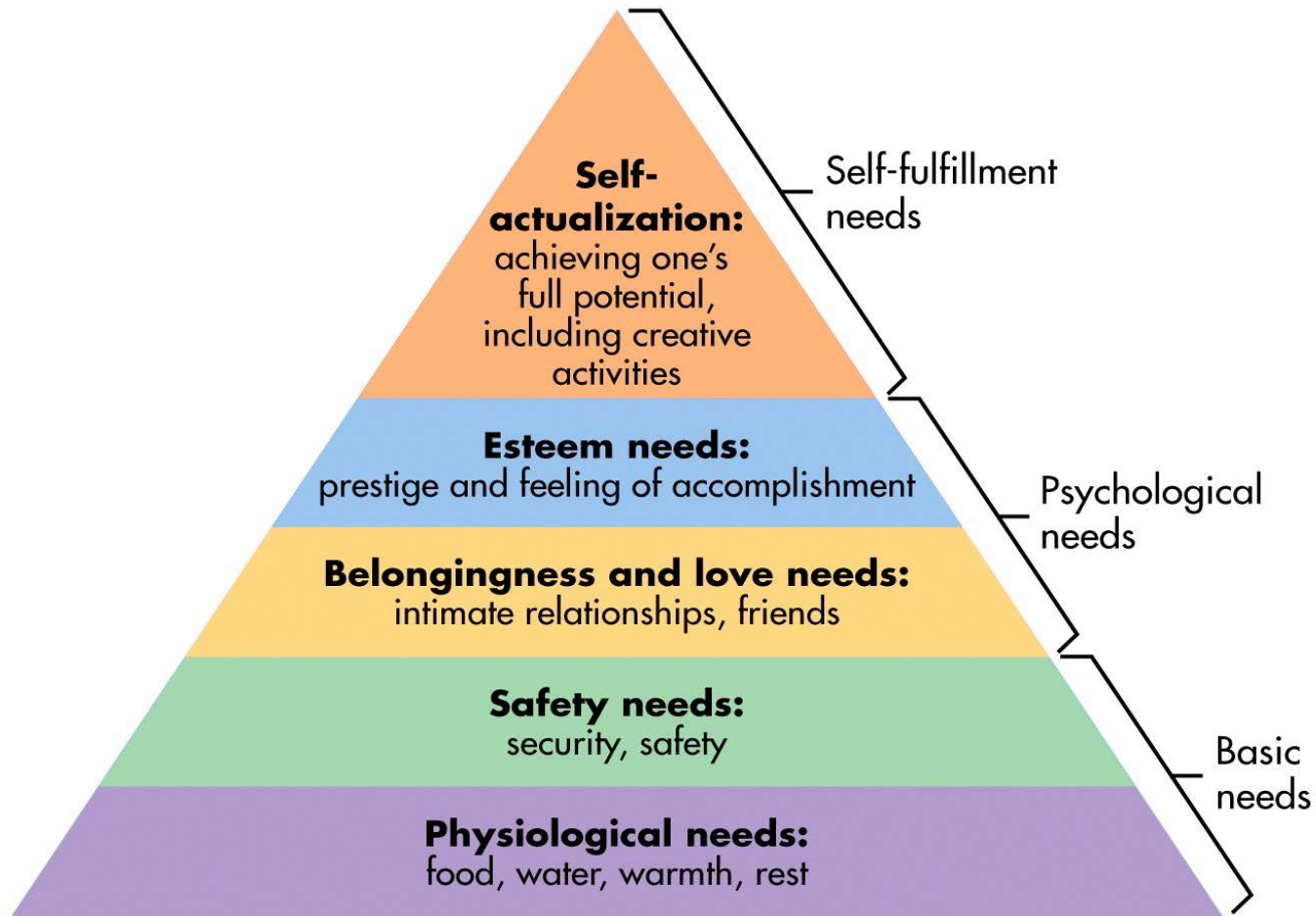
The study

End-of-voyage (T ¹)	T ¹ + 6 months (T ²)
<p>=1st (1st)* Helming</p> <p>=1st (=4th) Initial familiarisation of vessel</p> <p>=1st (=10th) Man Over Board</p> <p>=2nd(=4th) Introduction to sea-staff</p> <p>* Value in () indicates T² ranking</p>	<p>1st (=1st)* Helming</p> <p>=2nd (=2nd) Meals – eating together</p> <p>=2nd (=3rd) Night sailing</p> <p>3rd (=4th) On Watch</p> <p>* Value in () indicates T¹ ranking</p>

Subjective ‘significance’ using a 5-point (0 to 4) Likert scale

- inventory of 58 voyage-based activities: *Arrival, Initial Briefings, Safety, Seamanship, Sail Handling, Living Aboard, and Training Workshops* (Fletcher & Prince, 2017)

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



(Maslow, 1970)

What is it about helming?

It is situated aboard the vessel

- Authentic
- Mediated (Facilitated or Guided)
- Complexity
- Power
- Agency

The helmsman needs to make ‘active compensatory movements’ of the wheel to remain on course and ‘against the boat’s movements in order to keep their balance [... as they] make active counter movements with the rudder against the yawing of the boat.’

(adapted from Stadler, 1984)

Helming is...

an optimal experience or **Flow**

‘It is what the sailor holding a tight course feels when the wind whips through her hair, when the boat lunges through the waves like a colt – sails, hull, wind, and sea humming a harmony that vibrates in the sailor’s veins.’
(Csikszentmihalyi, 2008: 3)

Eudaimonia (after Aristotle, c.400BC)

Difficult to translate ...but accepted as the feeling of

‘being where one wants to be, doing what one wants to do’

‘where what is wanted is to be taken as being something worth doing’

‘living life in a full and deeply satisfying way’

(see Waterman, 2008; Deci & Ryan, 2008)

Other variables?



HOW YOUNG PEOPLE ARE POSITIVELY AFFECTED BY SAIL TRAINING

Sail training 'boosters'

'Intense / accelerated' experience – continuous, residential, can't walk away intensifies outcomes

'Peak' experience – strong memories creating more lasting impact

'Real' experience – actions have real consequences and learning is less abstract

'Risky' experience – participants feel trusted with responsibilities; + feel vulnerable, creating greater sense of equality

'Different' experience – new environment, no baggage

'Isolated' experience – lack of distraction means participants are more present

Activities

Doing things you don't think you can do / doing things outside your comfort zone eg climbing aloft, overcoming seasickness

Overcoming personal challenges to achieve goals

Being trusted by staff + given responsibility with real consequences

Doing things you don't want to do, eg domestic chores

Following a routine

Working as a team + supporting peers to achieve goals

Meeting and living in close proximity with new people

Problem solving put into practice

Learning and practicing new things

Learning about the environment

What they learn

Pride / sense of achievement

Self-confidence / self-belief / self-esteem

Self-reliance / independence

Resilience

Self-control / personal discipline

Organisational skills + time management

Value of teamwork + cooperation

Respect for + understanding of others

Expanded horizons

Knowledge of different social groups + ability to bridge social differences

Tangible skills (domestic, sailing, others)

Critical thinking skills

Knowledge of / respect for the environment

How it helps

Improved happiness / wellbeing

Higher aspirations

"Can do" attitude

Better engaged in communities / responsible citizens

Better relationships

More engaged in learning

Long-term impacts

Improved educational attainment

Improved employability

Improved long-term life chances

Activity

Which activities do you think have a significant impact for participants?

In groups, agree one activity that you all encounter on your vessels.

1. How is the activity mediated?

2. How could you develop or improve the activity?

Now consider how this activity may account for personal and social development.

Implications

Varied outcomes...

...each participant will **lamine** their individual voyage outcomes into their own **foundation of experience**

(after Boud & Walker, 1990)

How have you laminated your sail training experiences?

How do we measure this?

So what?

Practitioners:

How do you **mediate** the experience of *being at sea*?

Which activities have the greatest impact?

How can you develop your own and your organisations practices?

Researchers:

What should we study?

What do you want or need to know?

How do we bring *research into practice*

OR *practice into research*?

Any questions?

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